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Harnack's Image of *1 Clement* and Contemporary Research

Abstract: This paper wants to outline Berlin church historian Adolf von Harnack's view and opinion on the *First Letter of Clement* by taking a closer look at his works on the epistle. Furthermore, it will give an answer to the question what is to be gained from Harnack's studies for contemporary research on *1 Clement*. In 1929, Harnack published a small volume with the title *An Introduction to Early Christianity*. In his introduction to this booklet about the *First Letter of Clement*, Harnack explains why he considers the epistle to be “the most important document we have received from Earliest Christianity.” However, Harnack's scientific work on the *First Letter of Clement* already began to bear fruit much earlier, starting with the intense years in Leipzig at the beginning of his academic career before he obtained his state doctorate in 1875. During his lifelong research on *1 Clement*, Harnack obviously saw in the basal theology of the *First Letter of Clement* a not yet particularly Hellenized, simple message—interpreting the Letter as a “Clementine-Roman Christianity” that is far away from Pauline Christianity and draws lines right up to the newly strengthened Italian Catholicism after the Lateran Accords from 1929. Harnack's works dealing with the *First Letter of Clement* are, with the exception of the editions, evidence of a view of Early Christianity that, while it is impressive in its coherence, is nevertheless excessively one-sided.

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In 1929, one year before his death, the then elderly Berlin church historian and organizer of sciences, Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), published a small volume with the main title *An Introduction to Early Christianity*. When no mention is made of the subheading, in particular, it is not quite clear to the reader that, with this thin volume of 128 pages, the author had produced more than a mere workbook for a proseminar on church history. The subheading is *The Letter from the Roman Church to the Corinthian Church during the era of Domitian (1st Letter of Clement): Translated and Explained for Students*.¹ Upon closer examination, we are already

¹ Adolf von Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte: Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche an die korinthische aus der Zeit Domitians (I. Clemensbrief) übersetzt und den Studierenden erklärt* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929).

aware of four things in this title that are characteristic for Harnack. On the one hand, Harnack referred to students using a gender-neutral designation in German, because he was one of the first German theology professors who also welcomed female students to his seminars on church history.² On the other hand, the author relegates the traditional title of the *First Epistle of Clement* to inside parentheses and replaces it with the prosaic use of sender, addressee and the Roman Emperor, during whose reign Harnack dates the Epistle. And with this, as the foreword tells us, the celebrated scholar Harnack ended his teachings on the history of the church—which he had taught throughout the various stations of his career, “in Leipzig, Giessen, Marburg and Berlin over a period of 54 years (1874–1928)” —by leaving a kind of gift to the students, a “farewell,” as he called it, instead of with a work aimed at his academic colleagues or an interested public.³ Of course, it was not without reason that his working life as a scholar ended in the seventy-eighth year of his life with a small volume for students. His seminars on church history, as Harnack wrote in the foreword of this booklet, lay at the heart of his academic work and he maintained that, while “a great number of analyses and monographs by the students came out of the seminars, yet I assuredly learned more from these exercises than they did.”⁴ In the foreword, Harnack describes the times as “difficult”—however he is not only referring here to the economic situation immediately preceding the Great Crash of 1929, but also to his concern that developments within the field of academic theology could reduce the significance of the historical work already done and the importance of rational arguments to nothing. Harnack never developed an own understanding for the emergence of so-called Neo-orthodoxy (dialectical theology) or, in particular, the causes of Karl Barth. In an exchange of letters with this young colleague,⁵ Harnack pointedly expressed his fear that “the Reformation on the one hand and the Enlightenment

2 Taken from the ceremonial speech at his sixtieth birthday during the mentioned seminar: “Dann ist das Seminar weiter gegangen und hat Veränderungen einschneidender Art erlebt. Um Einiges zu erwähnen: eines Tages stellte sich eine Dame ein, und diese Dame konnte etwas, und infolgedessen wurde sie respektiert von denen, die da waren” (*Zur Erinnerung an den sechzigjährigen Geburtstag Adolf Harnacks am 7. Mai 1911, das kirchenhistorische Seminar* [Berlin: Rosenthal, 1911], 11–12).

3 Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 3.

4 Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 3.

5 See Adolf von Harnack, “Fünfzehn Fragen an die Verächter der wissenschaftlichen Theologie unter den Theologen,” *Christliche Welt* 37 (1923): 6–8; the subsequent public debate is documented by the critical edition: Karl Barth, *Offene Briefe 1909–1935* (vol. 5 of *Karl Barth Gesamtausgabe*; ed. Diether Koch; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2001), 55–88.

(and the ensuing idealism) on the other might be irreconcilably torn apart.”⁶ In the year before his *Introduction to Early Christianity* was published, this concerned scholar who represented German science both at home and abroad wrote even more clearly:

What is gratifying about our theology today (and this is a great thing), is that it is serious and it deals with the essentials. But how weak it is as a science, how narrow and sectarian are its horizons, how expressionistic its logical methods and how shortsighted its perception of history. . . . Incidentally, something that is temporarily in danger of being lost to theology altogether is its association with the *universitas litterarum* and with culture.⁷

The reader will not be mistaken if he also recognizes in Harnack’s book on the *First Letter of Clement* an attempt to once again present in difficult times what he himself describes as a comforting example of a powerful academic achievement with a broad horizon, argued with logical precision.

Ultimately, the combination of main title and subheading in Harnack’s book about *1 Clement* makes clear that the author uses the ancient epistle (as he writes at the beginning of the book) as more than mere introductory literature for teaching proseminars. For Harnack, “the letter from the Roman Church to the Corinthians from the era of Domitian” is, after the canonical writings of the New Testament, “the most important document we have received from Earliest Christianity.”⁸ The author states, “Neither the Roman Church, which is primarily addressed here, nor the Protestant churches, nor historical-theological thinking give due appreciation to the letter in their research or in their teaching.”⁹ The fact that Harnack’s text

⁶ Adolf von Harnack, review of Heinrich Hoffmann, *Der neuere Protestantismus und die Reformation*, *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 45 (1924): (409–410) 409. In the same year, Harnack held the ceremonial address at the inauguration of the new designed tomb of Immanuel Kant at Königsberg Cathedral: idem, *Immanuel Kant 1724–1924: Gedächtnisrede zur Einweihung des Grabmals im Auftrag der Albertus-Universität und der Stadt Königsberg in Preußen am 21. April 1924 im Dom zu Königsberg gehalten* (Berlin: Springer, 1924); cf. Friedrich W. Graf, “Der ‘Kant der Kirchengeschichte’ und der ‘Philosoph des Protestantismus’: Adolf von Harnacks Kant-Rezeption und seine Beziehungen zu den philosophischen Neukantianern,” in *Adolf von Harnack: Christentum, Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft: Wissenschaftliches Symposium aus Anlaß des 150. Geburtstags* (ed. Kurt Nowak et al.; Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 204; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 113–142.

⁷ Letter dated September 13, 1928 [addressed to Martin Rade], cited in Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, *Adolf von Harnack* (Berlin: Bott, 1936), 535.

⁸ Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 5.

⁹ Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 5.

is described by Willem Cornelis van Unnik as “spiritual testament,”¹⁰ and that it was published unamended several years ago in a collection of research pieces dealing with the *First Letter of Clement* titled *Encounters with Hellenism*, edited by Cilliers Breytenbach und Laurence L. Welborn,¹¹ shows that Harnack's book is a work on the Epistle and on the history of Early Christianity that is absolutely worth taking a closer look at. Incidentally, in an essay that was also printed in the same volume from Breytenbach und Welborn, Van Unnik not only characterized Harnack's booklet as his “intellectual testament,” but also described the historical situation of the last seminar with Dietrich Bonhoeffer acting as his “senior seminar assistant” and, to a lesser extent, alluded to Harnack's preliminary work on the *Letter of Clement*.¹²

Anyone dealing in more depth with the extensive oeuvre of Harnack, which was compiled as a gift by the Prussian State Library, which he headed, on the occasion of his 75th birthday in 1927 and added to after his death in 1930,¹³ might be puzzled by the fact that Harnack assigns such an important role to the *First Letter of Clement* in understanding Early Christianity and that he describes the epistle as “the most important document we have received from Earliest Christianity.” In view of the rest of Harnack's oeuvre, one has the impression that, over long periods of his life, other texts were more important, for example, the texts of the urban Roman teacher Marcion, which Harnack afforded a great deal of attention to from his days as a student in Dorpat/Tartu right up to the last years of his life when he published his landmark monograph on the early Christian bishop. In December 1870, while still a student, Harnack received the faculty's gold medal for an almost five hundred page essay with the distinctive title, “Marcion: The

10 So Cilliers Breytenbach and Laurence L. Welborn, “Editorial Introduction,” in iidem, eds., *Encounters with Hellenism: Studies on the First Letter of Clement* (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums / Ancient Judaism und Early Christianity 53; Leiden: Brill, 2004), (vii–viii) vii.

11 Adolf von Harnack, “Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche an die korinthische aus der Zeit Domitians (I. Clemensbrief),” in *Encounters with Hellenism: Studies on the First Letter of Clement* (eds. Cilliers Breytenbach and Laurence L. Welborn; Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums / Ancient Judaism und Early Christianity 53; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1–103.

12 Willem C. van Unnik, “Studies on the so-called First Epistle of Clement: The Literary Genre,” in *Encounters with Hellenism: Studies on the First Letter of Clement* (eds. Cilliers Breytenbach and Laurence L. Welborn; Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums / Ancient Judaism und Early Christianity 53; Leiden: Brill, 2004), (115–181) 115–117.

13 Friedrich Smend, *Adolf von Harnack: Verzeichnis seiner Schriften bis 1930* (Reprint of the original edition Leipzig 1927 and 1931; Mit einem Geleitwort und bibliographischen Nachträgen bis 1985 von Jürgen Dummer; Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1990); further additions available at <http://www.harnack.uni-wuppertal.de:88/> (last accessed November 15, 2012).

Modern Believer of the 2d Century, the First Reformer.”¹⁴ This work served, at the same time, as his examination thesis. Fifty years later, in 1921 to 1924, Harnack presented his great composition on the subject, initially in two volumes.¹⁵ If one looks through the wealth of his Berlin Academy treatises¹⁶ collected by Jürgen Dummer some years ago, one is surprised by the strong hierarchical structure of the Early Christian writings that finds expression in the statement concerning the *1 Clement* cited here. Otherwise, the Berlin scholar deals—in an incredibly broad sense—with the entire writings of Early Christianity from the first three centuries, which he himself refers to as the “paleontological epoch”¹⁷ of Christianity—a term that we will come back to. In the first part of my lecture, we will look at the question of whether, towards the end of his life, Harnack changed his view of the *First Letter of Clement* and perhaps even his view of the history of Early Christianity, and whether, despite the puzzlement mentioned above, the continuities must be seen to be greater than the discontinuities. This lecture complements an earlier one, which was deficient in this point, about Harnack as a New Testament scholar that I delivered some years ago at the first large conference about the Berlin scholar.¹⁸ Following this, the second shorter section of my lecture will bring Harnack’s insights on the *First Letter of Clement* into the discussion on contemporary research. But now *medias in res*:

14 Adolf Harnack, *Marcion: Der moderne Gläubige des 2. Jahrhunderts, der erste Reformator: Die Dorpater Preisschrift (1870)* (ed. Friedemann Steck; Kritische Edition des handschriftlichen Exemplars mit einem Anhang; TU 149; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003).

15 Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott: Eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der katholischen Kirche* (TU 45,2; Nachdruck der 2., verbesserten und vermehrten Auflage; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1924; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996); idem, *Neue Studien zu Marcion* (TU 44,4; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1923). On work and person cf. Wolfram Kinzig, *Harnack, Marcion und das Judentum: Nebst einer kommentierten Edition des Briefwechsels Adolf von Harnacks mit Houston Stewart Chamberlain* (Arbeiten zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte 13; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2004).

16 Adolf von Harnack, *Kleine Schriften zur Alten Kirche 1: Berliner Akademieschriften 1890–1907, mit einem Vorwort von Jürgen Dummer* (Opuscula 9,1; Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1980); idem, *Kleine Schriften zur Alten Kirche 2: Berliner Akademieschriften 1908–1930, mit einem Vorwort von Jürgen Dummer* (Opuscula 9,2; Leipzig, Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1980).

17 Adolf von Harnack, “Über die jüngsten Entdeckungen auf dem Gebiete der ältesten Kirchengeschichte,” in *Reden und Aufsätze 1* (acc. to 2d ed., with an intr.; ed. Ulrich Volp; Texts and Studies in the History of Theology 1; Mandelbachtal: Edition Cicero, 2001), (315–349 = 295–326) 318 (= 298).

18 Christoph Markschies, “Adolf von Harnack als Neutestamentler,” in *Adolf von Harnack: Theologe, Historiker, Wissenschaftspolitiker [Harnack-Symposium Schloß Ringberg/Tegernsee, 18.-20. März 1998]* (ed. Kurt Nowak and Otto G. Oexle; Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 161; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 365–395.

In his introduction to the booklet about the *First Letter of Clement*, Harnack explains why he considers the epistle to be “the most important document we have received from Earliest Christianity.” Interestingly, the Berlin scholar uses the Church for his line of argumentation, although the Church is otherwise not a particular focus of his work:

One cannot understand the essence and the spiritual structure of the great Church of the Greeks and Romans, which had already formed in the first century to become the mother of all churches, if one proceeds from the writings of the New Testament,—indeed, it can be only approached tentatively and unsurely from this standpoint. However, in the First Letter of Clement, the earliest Church, which had emerged from heathen roots, presents itself in essence and spirit as a church, and simple analysis both identifies its elements and anticipates its continued development towards becoming the Catholic Church.¹⁹

The paradigm of the Hellenization of Christianity, which was so important for Harnack and was a kind of fundamental category for understanding the first three centuries throughout the entire life of the scholar, surprisingly plays no role whatsoever here. As I have given a detailed outline of these correlations in the context of research history in a German booklet that is in print as well as in a shorter English version of this essay, we do not need to go into that in more detail here.²⁰ Harnack's term “Hellenization,” like his characterization of the first three centuries of Early Christianity as a “paleontological epoch,” is evidence, despite every effort to appreciate this period, of an inner and theologically motivated distance.

The term “paleontological epoch,” which Harnack—a church historian with a great enthusiasm for natural history—liked to use, not only aroused associations with a dark prehistory in which the Early Christian writings and their authors lived. To a great degree, Harnack was outlining his views on the contemporary meaning of these texts in a concise manner. Just as the fossils of prehistoric plants and animals studied in paleontology are of great importance in reconstructing their history and, with that, their contemporary biology, Harnack, by using the term “paleontological epoch,” was emphasizing how important the “fossilized theological opinions” from the “prehistoric era” of Christianity are for

¹⁹ Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 5.

²⁰ Christoph Marksches, *Hellenisierung des Christentums: Sinn und Unsinn einer historischen Deutungskategorie* (Forum Theologische Literaturzeitung 25; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012); in short and English: *Does it Make Sense to Speak about a 'Hellenization of Christianity' in Antiquity?* (Dutch Lectures in Patristics 1; Leiden: Brill, 2011), repr. in *Church History and Religious Culture* 92 (2012): 5–34, with references for further reading.

a reconstruction of its history and for understanding its contemporary situation. No doubt the expression also contains an element of criticism from the liberal theologian Harnack, which became clear to a large academic public in the year 1900 during the public lectures in Berlin about the *Essence of Christianity*.²¹ The vivid and at the same time simple Gospel of Jesus Christ from his loving Father became, according to Harnack, as it were, “fossilized” in the Hellenistic sermon of God’s son Jesus Christ. However, even if this critical implication of the term “paleontological layer” cannot be ruled out entirely in Harnack, it nevertheless at no time interfered with his great appreciation for the written texts that form part of this ancient process of transformation. Like his great role model Johann W. von Goethe,²² Harnack collected the fossilized testimonies of those epochs with a great deal of love and devotion, because, after all, the remnants of the past were uniquely preserved in these fossils.²³ And the aforementioned monograph about the urban Roman theologian Marcion, which is the accumulation of a lifelong interest in this thinker, as its subheading proves, is intended as *A Monograph on the History of the Foundations of the Catholic Church*.²⁴

Harnack was anyway very much interested in questions concerning the process by which Christianity transformed to become a Church and in matters of the church constitution and ecclesiastical law during the latter years of his life. His booklet on the *First Letter of Clement* can be seen as a culmination of his research in these areas. In 1909, he had already published his article about the “church constitution” from the *Protestant Encyclopedia for Theology and Church Matters*²⁵ in a separate brochure and dedicated several pages of it to the *First Letter of Clement*, which demonstrates what a central role he already ascribed to this epistle from the Roman to the Corinthian Church: “In the First Letter of

21 Adolf von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums: Sechzehn Vorlesungen vor Studierenden aller Fakultäten im Wintersemester 1899/1900 an der Universität Berlin gehalten* (ed. Claus D. Osthövener; 2d ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), with detailed page concordance of earlier editions, explanatory notes, materials and epilogue.

22 Wilfried Barner, “Adolf Harnack zwischen Goethekult und Goethephilologie,” in *Adolf von Harnack: Christentum, Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft: Wissenschaftliches Symposium aus Anlaß des 150. Geburtstages* (ed. Kurt Nowak et al.; Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 204; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 143–162.

23 I repeat a view which I outlined before: Christoph Marksches, “Adolf Harnack,” in *Religionsstifter der Moderne: Von Karl Marx bis Johannes Paul II* (ed. Alf Christophersen and Friedemann Voigt; München: Beck, 2009), (138–149, 296–298) 148.

24 Cf. above p. 58 with Harnack, *Marcion* (see note 15).

25 Adolf Harnack, “Verfassung, kirchliche, und kirchliches Recht im 1. und 2. Jahrhundert,” *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* 20 (3d ed.; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908): 508–546.

Clement, we finally have an account of the Church's constitutional situation that is not merely approximate and incoherent, but studied, coherent and extensive."²⁶ Harnack first of all takes balance of the situation in Corinth as described in the letter and then adds the "theory and historical assertions with respect to religious office" that the letter contains from the fortieth chapter—"the theory that the Old Testament religious offices, therefore also the specific offices—high priest, priests, Levites, laymen—act as role models for the Christian community (high priest = Christ, priests = bishops, Levites = deacons)."²⁷ Nevertheless, the view expressed twenty years later that this theory about the Old Testament roots of Christian office made it possible "to anticipate the further development towards the Catholic Church,"²⁸ was not yet present at that time. But one recognizes well the functional nature of Harnack's work on the *First Letter of Clement* that marked his work throughout his life. In 1888, he wrote to the then university lecturer at the Prussian Ministry of Culture Friedrich Althoff (1839–1908): "When teaching theology, everything depends on the student knowing how Catholicism *came about*, how it is related to Original Christianity, how did the dogma, the cult, the constitution *come into being*, and how can one judge these accordingly."²⁹ To put it a little more pointedly, the *First Letter of Clement* was for Harnack, throughout his life, "the most important document we have received from Earliest Christianity," because it explains the emergence of a church constitution, from which—as Harnack writes in his booklet from 1929—"its continued development to become the Catholic Church can also be anticipated."³⁰

However, Harnack's scientific work on the *First Letter of Clement* already began to bear fruit much earlier, starting with the intense years in Leipzig at the beginning of his academic career before he obtained his state doctorate in 1875. Already in 1873, that is, in the period between writing his thesis and receiving his doctorate, he wrote to his Baltic friend Moritz von Engelhardt, with whom he had studied: "To begin with, I am sitting over Clement studying the hopelessly intricate question concerning the various different Clements. If only I had you

26 Adolf Harnack, *Entstehung und Entwicklung der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts in den zwei ersten Jahrhunderten: Samt einer Kritik der Abhandlung R. Sohms "Wesen und Ursprung des Katholizismus" und Untersuchungen über "Evangelium," "Wort Gottes" und das Trinitarische Bekenntnis* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1910; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990).

27 Harnack, *Entstehung und Entwicklung der Kirchenverfassung* (see note 26), 53. Almost literally identical with idem, "Verfassung" (see note 25), 525.

28 Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 5.

29 Memorandum by Harnack addressed to Althoff on September 27, 1888, quoted in von Zahn-Harnack, *Adolf von Harnack* (see note 7), 176.

30 Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 5.

here to advise and support me!³¹ This reading exercise—as so often the case with Harnack—served a clear purpose. The traditional Hinrichs publishing house, with which Harnack maintained a business relationship throughout his life that was certainly financially profitable for both parties,³² had suggested that he publish a volume of the so-called Apostolic Fathers together with his Baltic friend from university days, Oskar von Gebhardt (1844–1906), and the New Testament and Patristics scholar, Theodor von Zahn (1838–1933). This was to replace the book released by the same publishing house and written by philologist and private scholar Albert Dressel (1801–1875), which had been released in 1862 as an extended second edition.³³ Harnack felt unable to cope with this assignment, especially as he wasn't really a philologist. In her biography of her father, his daughter later wrote that the work “was mainly divided up in such a way that Gebhardt took care of the text composition, while Harnack wrote the introductory essays. The first issues appeared already in (18)75 and were well-received by the critics.”³⁴ Harnack wrote to Ritschl, “Been writing Latin comments for a few weeks, and my head is buzzing as if it was filled with small and annoying insects . . . Luckily I have very good friends, theologians and philosophers here who are a great help to me.”³⁵ Naturally, the first issue with the edition of the two *Letters of Clement*, which had been put together with so much effort, was already outdated upon release. Research into the letters had experienced a considerable boost in 1875

31 Letter dated September 1873, addressed to Moritz Baron von Engelhardt; cited in von Zahn-Harnack, *Adolf von Harnack* (see note 7), 82.

32 Lucie Geist, “Ein Geschäft recht geistiger Natur”: Zum 200. Jahrestag der Gründung des J.C. Hinrichs Verlags Leipzig, mit einem Nachwort von Erika und Manfred Taube (Leipzig: Neuer Sachsenverlag & Sachsenbuch Verlagsgesellschaft, 1991), 24–25, 48—Unfortunately the remainders of the ransacked archive does not contain any correspondence between the publisher Hermann Rost and Harnack during those early years: *Sächsisches Staatsarchiv: Staatsarchiv Leipzig: 22208 Hinrichs, Leipzig 1880–1975: Findbuch* (ed. Anke Weber; Leipzig: Manuskriptdruck, 2010), 57–59.

33 Albert R. M. Dressel, ed., *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera: textum ad fidem codicum et graecorum et latinorum, ineditorum copia insignium, adhibitis praestantissimis editionibus, recensuit atque emendavit, notis illustravit, versione latina passim correctâ, prolegomenis, indicibus* (mit einer Vorrede von Constantin Tischendorf; 2d ed.; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1863).

34 Von Zahn-Harnack, *Adolf von Harnack* (see note 7), 84.—Oskar von Gebhardt, Adolf Harnack, and Theodor Zahn, eds., *Patrum Apostolicorum opera: Textum ad fidem codicum et Graecorum et Latinorum adhibitis prae-stantissimis editionibus, recensuerunt commentario exegetico et historico illustraverunt apparatu critico versione latina passim correctâ prolegominis indicibus* 1,1: *Clementis Romani ad corinthios quae dicuntur epistulae. Textum ad fidem codicum et Alexandrina et Constantinopolitani nuper inventi* (2d ed.; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1876).

35 Letter by Harnack addressed to Albrecht Ritschl on February 19, 1876, in *Albrecht Ritschls Briefwechsel mit Adolf Harnack 1875–1889* (ed. Joachim Weinhardt; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 132–133.

thanks to the publication of the *Hierosolymitanus* by Philotheos Bryennios, which Harnack and his Leipzig friend, Oskar Gebhardt, referred to as the *Codex Constantinopolitanus*, and also due to the Latin translation published by the Belgian Benedictine Germain Morin (1861–1946)³⁶ in 1894.³⁷ As is generally known, Bryennios had discovered the manuscript from the year 1056 C.E. in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery of the Most Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople.³⁸

Oskar von Gebhardt and Adolf Harnack published a corrected second edition a year later, which integrated the variants of the second manuscript. The following year saw the first issue of an *editio minor*, six editions of which were published by 1920.³⁹ However, in October 1875, Adolf Harnack and Theodor Zahn had a serious dispute with one another over a thesis of Zahn's concerning *The Shepherd of Hermas*, during which Zahn accused Harnack of reading the source materials only fleetingly and threatened him with terminating the working partnership.⁴⁰ The strain in their joint publishing relationship is evident in Zahn's review of the *Letters of Clement* by Gebhardt and Harnack. While he declares his "sincere appreciation" of the edition, he nevertheless laments that Harnack, with respect to the author and the date of composition of the *First Letter of Clement*, "did not achieve the precision" which, "in my opinion can be achieved today if one objectively examines the historical information and the remarkable efforts being made to understand this correctly."⁴¹ Harnack was pretty angry about this review.⁴² The

36 Oliver A. Grosselin, "Dom Germain Morin," *American Benedictine Review* 6 (1955): 408–418.

37 Germain Morin, ed., *Sancti Clementis Romani ad Corinthios epistulae* (Anecdota Maredsolana 2; Maredsous: apud editorem, 1894).

38 Philotheos Bryennios, ed., *Tu en hagiois patros hēmōn Klēmētos episkopu Rōmēs hai dyo pros Korinthios epistolai ek cheiographu tēs en Phanariō Kōnstantinopoleos Bibliothēkēs tu Panagiu Taphu* (Konstantinopolei, 1875); vgl. auch Horacio E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief* (Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 13–17.

39 Oskar von Gebhardt, Adolf Harnack, and Theodor Zahn, eds., *Patrum Apostolicorum opera: Textum ad fidem codicum et Graecorum et Latinorum adhibitis, praestantissimus editionibus* (Editio minor; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1877).

40 Details in Uwe Swarat, *Alte Kirche und Neues Testament: Theodor Zahn als Patristiker* (Monographien und Studienbücher 342; Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1991), 454–457; cf. Friedrich W. Kantzenbach, "Adolf Harnack und Theodor Zahn: Geschichte und Bedeutung einer gelehrten Freundschaft," *ZKG* 83 (1972): (226–244) 236–239.

41 Theodor Zahn, review of Adolf Harnack, *Clementis Romani ad corinynthios quae dicuntur epistulae*, editio secunda 1876, *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen* (1876): (1409–1438) 1436; on this also Swarat, *Alte Kirche und Neues Testament* (see note 40), 456.

42 Swarat, *Alte Kirche und Neues Testament* (see note 40), 456 with reference to a letter dated January 14, 1878 (in Kantzenbach, "Adolf Harnack und Theodor Zahn" [see note 40], 239).

working partnership of the two was shaken to its core and never recovered. In the following years, Harnack seems (perhaps affected by the stressful and frustrating experiences involved in publishing the two *Letters of Clement*) to have lost his passion for the subject to some extent. In his great work, *The History of Dogma*, the first edition of which appeared in 1886, and the most widespread, extensively revised and expanded edition in 1909, documents from all of the writings attributed to the so-called Apostolic Fathers are dealt with in the section on “The rise of church dogma or the emergence of the Apostolic Catholic doctrine and the first scientific system of church doctrine.”⁴³ He merely stresses how the letter uses not only scripture but also “Early Christian writings whose authority was of a less dignified rank” in its argumentation and that it is Pauline in nature with respect to reconciliation and justification.⁴⁴ Clearly less refined is the section dedicated to *1 Clement* in the *History of Early Christian Literature until Eusebius* that was produced with Erwin Preuschen and published in 1893⁴⁵—the inventory that was to prepare the way for and accompany the volume on *Greek Christian Authors* at the Prussian Academy of the Sciences. In the first volume on the *Tradition and Inventory of Early Christian Literature*, a reliable account is given about the handwritten document (before the discovery of the Latin translation by Morin) as well as about the witnesses of the letter up to Photius.⁴⁶

The question of dating the letter comes in the second section of the work, in the chronology. After explaining both his internal and external reasons, Harnack clearly states himself in favor of the era of Domitian: “The external and internal reasons thus coincide with one another excellently: Our Letter was written at the end of the reign of Domitian between circa 93–95, less likely 96 or 97.”⁴⁷ The sentence that summarizes this section admittedly sounds very different to the lines cited at the beginning from his farewell to teaching church history from the year 1929, that is, almost 30 years later. Harnack’s opinion in 1897 was that the author of the *First Letter of Clement* is nowhere guilty of spreading “ ‘unusual

⁴³ Adolf Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte 1: Die Entstehung des kirchlichen Dogmas* (4th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1909), 157–243.

⁴⁴ Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte 1* (see note 43), 49, 129.

⁴⁵ Adolf Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius* (2 parts in 4 vols.; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1893–1904).

⁴⁶ Adolf Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius 1,1: Die Überlieferung und der Bestand* (bearb. unter Mitwirkung v. Erwin Preuschen; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1893; 2d. ed. 1958), 39–47.

⁴⁷ Adolf Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius 2,1: Die Chronologie der Litteratur bis Irenäus nebst einleitenden Untersuchungen* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1896; 2d. ed. 1958), 251–255; 255 quoted.

Gnosis,' rather, he assumes that what he is saying is commonly known and only requires a little inculcation. His letter is therefore suited to a great degree to define the majority Christianity that comes after him."⁴⁸ In the following years, the *First Letter of Clement* is only referred to, if at all, as a source text for research into the chronology of very early, and above all Roman Christianity, for example, in the *Timelines of the Christian Missions*, the first edition of which appeared in 1902.⁴⁹ Not until 1909, did he again lecture at the Prussian Academy on 1 Clement under the title, "The First Letter of Clement: A Study to Define the Character of Earliest Gentile Christianity."⁵⁰ Here, Harnack justified the special significance of the Epistle in his introduction with the fact that it was handed down in the four languages—Greek, Latin, Syrian, and Coptic—and ascribes its importance to its proximity to the canonical New Testament writings.⁵¹ His conclusion, very much along the same lines as what he stated in his farewell to teaching church history around twenty years later, is correspondingly benign:

And so there can be no doubt that the Letter was regarded as a classical Christian document in the earliest Gentile Church and that this Church saw itself, with its ideals and strengths, reflected in the Letter. . . . As such, we have no evidence at all in the entire area of earliest subapostolic writings that can be compared with (1 Clement) in terms of authoritative importance.⁵²

Harnack defines the character of Gentile Christianity as it is discerned in the letter as a "moral movement on the basis of a monotheism that is perceived with the highest solemnity and the greatest vitality."⁵³ Interesting is the historical parallel drawn by Harnack for his Academy colleagues, most of whom were not experts in the subject matter:

48 Harnack, *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur* 2,1 (see note 47), 255.

49 Adolf Harnack, "Die ältesten christlichen Datierungen und die Anfänge einer bischöflichen Chronographie in Rom," *Sitzungsberichte der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch-historische Klasse* (1892): 617–658, repr. in idem, *Kleine Schriften zur alten Kirche* 1 (see note 16), 41–82.

50 Adolf Harnack, "Der erste Klemensbrief: Eine Studie zur Bestimmung des Charakters des ältesten Heidenchristentums," *Sitzungsberichte der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch-historische Klasse* (1909): 38–61; repr. in idem, *Kleine Schriften zur alten Kirche* 2 (see note 16), 41–66.

51 Harnack, "Der erste Klemensbrief" (see note 50), 39–40 (= 42–43).

52 Harnack, "Der erste Klemensbrief" (see note 50), 40 (=43).

53 Harnack, "Der erste Klemensbrief" (see note 50), 42 (=45).

From the first to the last page, this fundamental character is powerfully expressed in the letter and one must look to the resolute morality of the puritans of England and of New England before you will find again in common religion a place where the sovereignty of God's Holy Laws are accepted so self-evidently as the essence of all living. . . . Ultimately, the substance of the law is basically the same; because, there and here, it is by no means directed dualistically at the world as if the world embodied the principle of evil, but rather orients itself towards the positive ideals of moral purity as well as the spiritual and corporal unity that is to be gained by meekness, love and a willingness to serve. Neither a flight from the world nor asceticism are the moral ideal . . . , but rather the complex of all virtues in sentiment that guarantee a divine and pure, a peaceful life shared with others. In one word, it is the *simple* morality shining with the presence and power of God that matters to these Christians.⁵⁴

It is at this point, at the latest, that another reason for Harnack's lifelong interest in the *First Letter of Clement* becomes clear. Harnack, who also repeatedly assigned to the Annunciation (for example, in his famous lectures about the *Nature of Christianity*) the attribute "simple," was describing beneath the mask of a historical analysis his own, in the tradition of Kant, ethically (as he says, "morally") intense, "simple" devoutness. It now becomes clear, why, in the farewell to teaching church history twenty years later, the entire complex surrounding the question of "Hellenization" is not mentioned. Harnack obviously saw in the basal theology of the *First Letter of Clement* a not yet particularly Hellenized, simple message that reminded him of English and New England puritanism. At the same time, Harnack closes his treatise with an excursus "About the correlations between the First Letter of Clement and antique literature and culture," in which he coined a famous phrase for the first time, one that he then repeated word for word in the booklet of 1929: "But the Letter is, from a language point of view, influenced by two literary tones, as it were, one of which is the Hebraic 'tone' (LXX) and one of which is the Greek 'tone' (rhythmic prose)."⁵⁵ Harnack argues that the *First Letter of Clement* is, for this reason, "a mixed product . . . in terms of style" and "it is this mixture," as Harnack honestly admits, "that frightens off aesthetically sensitive critics."⁵⁶ Other additions are a list of "technical Church terms that are certified for the first time in 1 Clement" and an excursus concerning when the letter was written.⁵⁷ It is by no means exaggerated, if one recognizes in this programmatic treatise for the Academy the core of what Harnack published twenty years later in his *Introduction to Early Christianity*.

⁵⁴ Harnack, "Der erste Klemensbrief" (see note 50), 43 (=46).

⁵⁵ Harnack, "Der erste Klemensbrief" (see note 50), 56 (= 59).

⁵⁶ Harnack, "Der erste Klemensbrief" (see note 50), 57 (= 60).

⁵⁷ Harnack, "Der erste Klemensbrief" (see note 50), 61–62 (= 64–65).

This booklet, which we started out with, is chronologically Harnack's next written expression, and at the same time his last, dealing with the *First Letter of Clement*. It was with this booklet that we began the first section and it is with it that we will close. Harnack starts with briefly summarized introductory statements concerning the hand-written version of the letter and the testimony of other Early Christian authors and then goes on to provide a translation of the letter that is fluent and very pleasant to read.⁵⁸ This is followed by comments about the author, on the "character of the letter and its religious content." In this section, Harnack defends his notion of the letter as a piece of writing marked by a religion of morality—he cites and refutes Joseph B. Lightfoot, whom he accuses of having a traditional understanding of the letter's theology that is overly oriented towards doctrinal concepts and he repeats, almost word for word, the sentences that appeared twenty years before in his Academy essay concerning the new religion in the letter as "a moral movement based on a monotheism that is perceived with the highest solemnity and greatest vitality, or better: based on the reality of God." With respect to the puritans of England and New England, who the religiosity of the *First Letter of Clement* had already reminded him of twenty years previously, Harnack added "Calvin in Geneva" as a point of comparison.⁵⁹ Harnack interprets the letter as a "Clementine-Roman Christianity" that is far away from Pauline Christianity and draws lines right up to the newly strengthened Italian Catholicism after the Lateran Accords from the same year, 1929. He also mentions the fact that the Church of Rome today is still strengthened through the "peace treaty between the Vatican and Fascist Italy, which we have just witnessed."⁶⁰ As sources of "Clementine-Roman Christianity," Harnack names above all the Old Testament: "These Roman writings belong in their foundations and in their religious demeanor to the history of the Old Testament religion and Late Judaism."⁶¹ Thetically, Harnack finds that Christian thought exists alongside the, as he says, legacy of Late Judaism and is not really connected to it.⁶²

Our Letter is not only influenced by two, but by three literary tones. The religion of the Old Testament with an understanding that comes from Late Judaism, the Hellenic moral idealism and the fact of the Epiphany of Jesus (together with the Kerygma and the new ways of life that they issued as imperatives and delivered as powers) form the content of the Letter. This trinity constitutes Christianity as it appeared to Clement and the Roman

58 Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 9–11, 12–49.

59 Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 58.

60 Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 8, 66.

61 Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 71.

62 Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 78.

Church. However, with that the Catholic Church was given as a religion and no essential new element was needed.⁶³

Even if we are touched by the fact that Harnack, in the end, leaves us with themes for further consideration and unfolds in twelve points⁶⁴ the lines of development which, in his opinion, led to the “Catholic Church” of Late Antiquity and later periods—it is comparatively clear why it was hardly possible to pick up on the concept unfolded here following that.

And now we come to the very brief second section of this paper, the question about possible connections between Harnack’s view of the *First Letter of Clement* and contemporary research. In the previous section, it became clear to what extent Harnack’s view was influenced by his own theological constructions about how the “Catholic Church” was formed, and by his own systematic preferences for a simple, ethically pronounced Christianity as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It is based on this template that he judged the letter, which is why he was at the same time fascinated and repelled by it. This is something that one, nowadays, can no longer take up on, unless one intended to reconstitute a research method that is denominationally dictated to such an extent and predetermined by individual, systematic theology. Of course, one can under no circumstances take on board today his strangely negative evaluation of Judaism as a mere religion of laws and, of course, we can also no longer accept his oddly idiosyncratic description of the literary style of the letter without taking a look at contemporary non-Christian and non-Jewish literature. To put it succinctly, Harnack’s works dealing with the *First Letter of Clement* are, with the exception of the editions, evidence of a view of Early Christianity that, while it is impressive in its coherence, is nevertheless excessively one-sided. A corresponding awkwardness when dealing with Harnack has been evident in various more recent works, which brings me back to the aforementioned *Encounters with Hellenism*. If one looks through the works collected there, one does not have the impression that Harnack’s booklet has played a central role in the scientific discussions about the *First Letter of Clement* since it was published in 1929. Willem C. van Unnik, who appears in this volume after Werner Jaeger, marginally refers to Harnack, as mentioned, with a reference to the Berlin seminar and the farewell gift.⁶⁵ The editor, Welborn, does state that

⁶³ Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 85–86.

⁶⁴ Harnack, *Einführung in die Alte Kirchengeschichte* (see note 1), 100–102.

⁶⁵ Van Unnik, “Studies on the so-called First Epistle of Clement” (see note 12), 125, 128, 161, 172, 179.—Cf. idem “1 Clement 34 and the ‘Sanctus’,” *VigChr* 5 (1952): 204–248 and idem “Is 1 Clement 20 purely Stoic?,” *VigChr* 4 (1950): 181–189; also idem “‘Tiefer Friede’ (1. Klemens 2,2),” *VigChr* 24 (1970): 261–279.

dating the letter to the Roman Church during the reign of Emperor Domitian, something in favor of which mainly Bishop Lightfoot argued, was popularized by Harnack—but he does this in order to present it as problematic and to refute it.⁶⁶

Sometimes, studying a masterly piece of research work from the past also makes clear that we no longer can nor should work in this way today. Studying such methods of researching, which appear to be dead-end streets from today's perspective, is of course useful and makes us humble in the face of our own mistakes. And, taking this into consideration, even if one does not wholly accept the results of Harnack's research work, nevertheless we have today a scientific physiognomy that is not all that dissimilar to him.

66 Laurence L. Welborn, "The Preface to 1 Clement: The Rhetorical Situation and the Traditional Date," in *Encounters with Hellenism: Studies on the First Letter of Clement* (ed. Cilliers Breytenbach and Laurence L. Welborn; Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums / Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 53; Leiden: Brill, 2004), (197–216) 198–201, 204.